

PROPOSAL EVALUATION

Integrated Regional Water Management Implementation Proposition 50, Chapter 8 IRWM Implementation Step 1

PIN: 6416
APPLICANT NAME: Solano County Water Agency
PROJECT TITLE: Solano Integrated Water Management Projects

FUNDS REQUESTED: \$ 3,191,900
COST MATCH: \$20,632,100
TOTAL PROJECT COST: \$23,824,000

DESCRIPTION: Project #1 is a groundwater conjunctive use project in RD 2068 that will construct one production well and monitoring wells to test how groundwater can be used in the District during drier years, with the District's surface water provided to cities. #2 is an intertie between the Putah South Canal (Solano Project water) and the North Bay Aqueduct of the State Water Project (NBA). Cities participating in the project will allow agricultural users to use their NBA supplies in exchange for the agricultural users' higher quality Solano Project water in storage. #3 is series of multi-level groundwater monitoring wells and subsidence monitoring stations in eastern Solano County to get data to improve knowledge of conjunctive use opportunities and to provide data for groundwater modeling. #4 is a wastewater recycling project that would treat Benicia's wastewater and provide it to the Valero refinery for industrial use.

Question: Consistency with Minimum IRWM Standards - This evaluation will focus on whether the applicant has demonstrated that the IRWM Plan meets the minimum standards.

Pass

Question: Consistency with IRWM Standards - Adopted IRWM Plan and Proof of Formal Adoption. Weighting factor is 1. 5

The IRWMP was adopted by the applicant's Board on February 10, 2005. Proof is provided (letter, action item No. 2005-16).

Question: Consistency with IRWM Standards - Description of Region. Weighting factor is 1. 3

Current and future water resources are discussed, in admittedly broad detail, from the SWP and the Project through the NBA. The IRWMP also discusses local supplies and information gaps. The applicant provided 2020 demand projections for its primary surface water sources and uses by hydrologic year type. Detailed information about surface water resources based on court decisions, water rights held, or contracted supplies is provided. Less detailed is the groundwater supply information. Water quality is not discussed in detail, but a number of prioritized projects include water quality objectives. The regional social, economic, and cultural character are discussed, but trends in growth or conservation are not discussed in detail. Both participation with and geographic and hydrologic relationships with adjacent regions are also included.

Question: Consistency with IRWM Standards - Objectives. Weighting factor is 1. 4

The methodology and criteria for selection is well described and regional planning objectives selected, screened in, and screened out are listed. The "Condition 12 Settlement Agreement" is a court prescribed means of addressing water issues of conflict in the region. Other issues around the Solano Project seem to be worked out and these plans seem to be focused on quantification and planning within the judicial, regulatory, economic, and physical limitations and requirements. The manner in which the objectives were developed by the Stakeholder Group is discussed in detail in the IRWMP. However, the determination of specific objectives (Strategic Issues) utilizing the well formulated process was not adequately addressed. Discussion about how the process lead to the list of strategic issues was not apparent.

Question: Consistency with IRWM Standards - Water Management Strategies and Integration. Weighting factor is 1. 4

Each strategic issue identified and selected is addressed, but it's not clear how that analysis led to the list of water management strategies included in the IRWMP. Recreation was considered but not included in the IRWMP as it was deemed a low priority by the management team and stakeholder group. Projects were grouped by water management strategy and linked across categories through collaborative efforts within the stakeholder group and management team for a consistent proposal and extensive prioritization process. The benefits of integration are stated as the capability to make the best use of limited resources and identification of potential links with other regions around specific projects.

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Question: Consistency with IRWM Standards - Priorities and Schedule. Weighting factor is 1.

4

The prioritization process allowed input from each stakeholder and was based on evaluating each project with respect to a comprehensive prioritization system, employing selected criteria and a rating scale, which the stakeholder's endorsed. Project actions were prioritized into three tiers based on the prioritization process and readiness to proceed. The IRWMP allows for adaptive management to incorporate changed priorities or conditions through regular review. No IRWMP implementation chronology or schedule is provided. Although the IRWMP is intended to guide multiple agencies, it seems focused primarily on applicant's activities.

Question: Consistency with IRWM Standards - Implementation. Weighting factor is 1.

3

The applicant did not provide a timeline for project completion. Linkages between projects cited include the quality limitations on supply projects, application of successful techniques across projects, and cost benefit comparisons for supply source alternatives. The entities responsible for project implementation are given, and most show the applicant as the lead agency. The language using "potential" projects, actions, and implementing agencies leaves some question as to the surety of the proposal and the degree of coordination with others.

Question: Consistency with IRWM Standards - Impacts and Regional Benefits. Weighting factor is 1.

4

Potential environmental impacts were among the screening criteria for inclusion in the IRWMP. The regional benefits include the potential for project level coordination and other linkages with other regions. The interregional aspects of the proposal include water purchases and potential transfer agreements. The applicant states "All (communities) will benefit from general improvements in WQ and water supply reliability." At a programmatic level, the applicant expects no significant impacts to other resources, but each project will need to consider CEQA requirements before it can be executed.

Question: Consistency with IRWM Standards - Technical Analysis and Plan Performance. Weighting factor is 1.

4

The applicant states that no new technical analysis was done for the IRWMP; instead a qualitative analysis was done for project ranking. Data gaps are only marginally discussed in the application. Performance measures are included in a number of the actions as a means for achieving plan objectives. Semi-annual plan progress reports for the status of the Tier 1 actions will be provided to the applicant's Board of Directors. The applicant intends to apply adaptive management technique to adapt to change and an example is provided for land use planning with BMPs.

Question: Consistency with IRWM Standards - Data Management. Weighting factor is 1.

3

Solano Project monitoring and water quality data programs are cited as inputs to the applicant's data management system. Gaps have been identified in the area of groundwater information. The applicant states a willingness and intent to integrate water quality and groundwater data collected with SWAMP and GAMA. The applicant states that it has an extensive electronic data base management system and experience collecting water quality data. However, that information could not be found in the IRWMP. The data types included in the data management system are not discussed in more detail, and nor are the capabilities of the data management system. How data is made available to the public and the types of data available is not stated.

Question: Consistency with IRWM Standards - Financing. Weighting factor is 1.

3

One of the project selection criteria was Affordability, where projects scored higher if project funding was easily obtained (either low cost and/or funding partners were readily available). Applicant states that they will implement all Tier 1 project actions and that it has "adequate resources to complete Tier 1 actions." External source financing, capital cost, and staffing costs are identified in Table 7-3 for some actions, but comments could be expanded. Specifically, O&M costs are not discussed in the context of the proposed actions, but only are provided for flood control projects and other programs. There is also some question regarding the long-term availability of the Capital Project Funding Plan, as the applicant states that no excess revenues are expected for FY 04-05, and 05-06.

Question: Consistency with IRWM Standards - Relation to Local Planning & Sustainability. Weighting factor is 1.

4

The IRWMP was developed by the applicant and its member agencies, which include all incorporated cities in Solano County and all agricultural districts that retail water supply. Each City's Master Plan was used in the IRWMP development. However, it is clear which local plans were specifically included and how and why they were included in the IRWMP. Member agency staff were either directly involved in the stakeholder group, or reviewed sections of the IRWMP as it was developed. One of the Tier 1 actions is to track and coordinate with ongoing water and land management processes.

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Question: Consistency with IRWM Standards - Stakeholder Involvement & Coordination. Weighting factor is 1.

4

The stakeholder process of the IRWMP development effort included plan elements screened both in and out by participants. Public meetings, applicant Advisory Commission meetings, and the six stakeholder meetings were the means of garnering and incorporating stakeholder input. Letters of invitation were sent to major Stakeholders in the area prior to IRWMP notice of publication and Draft Plan public meetings. No list of recipients is included. The applicant sees no obstacles to IRWMP implementation. Environmental justice concerns are not discussed. The Solano Project is a federal project, so the actions related to it would necessitate coordination with and decision by the USBR.

Question: Funding Match. This evaluation will focus on whether the applicant has demonstrated the ability to meet the minimum funding match or has requested a waiver or reduction in the funding match.

Pass

Question: Description of Proposal. Weighting factor is 3.

12

The four proposed projects directly follow goals within the IRWMP and are as follows: 1) a conjunctive use pilot project; 2) a project to utilize recycled water for refinery operations; 3) groundwater monitoring; and an intertie between the Solano Project and the North Bay Aqueduct. There is no mention of coordination with agricultural interest representatives outside of Solano Irrigation District. Only a feasibility study for the intertie project is discussed as scientific merit for the projects. The environmental requirements are not discussed, although every project will need some impact statement. Monitoring and measurements of results are discussed.

Question: Project Prioritization. Weighting factor is 2.

8

The priority of the four projects is discussed by the applicant. These selected projects are identified in the IRWMP as high priority for the region and meet a number of the water management strategies considered in the IRWMP. The proposal prioritization is related to the IRWMP through the goals and objectives of each project and the degree to which they are in agreement. That prioritization in the IRWMP effort resulted in a list of potential actions, not a list of those projects selected. What is lacking is a discussion of the method that the stakeholder group used to make the transition from general program to the specific projects in the proposal.

Question: Cost Estimate. Weighting factor is 1.

3

The applicant provides basic budget categories, but the narratives for each project's cost estimate table are too generalized and lack detail to determine if projects costs are reasonable. Agency overhead is an undocumented amount not included in the application, but noted in the budget narratives. Matching funds are shown in the project totals and are identified only as non-state funds. The contingencies for construction range from ten to twenty percent. The agency has a water recycling planning study grant (up to \$75,000) from State Water Board (Prop 13 repayment is the source of funding) to study and evaluate the feasibility of the water recycling project proposed for implementation as part of this package.

Question: Schedule. Weighting factor is 1.

3

Each proposed project has a schedule provided; however, each schedule shows only a major task heading. The schedule should include more project details, including subtasks. The schedules submitted do show individual project actions and duration on a calendar timeline through 2009. Dependencies are not shown, and the items are not explicitly correlated with the budget items or between projects, but they do seem to make practical sense. CEQA compliance items are shown on each project schedule through August 2006, but are not included in any of the budget tables.

Question: Need. Weighting factor is 2.

6

The proposal addresses water supply reliability, water quality improvements, and water demand issues. The benefits of the proposal as a whole include lowered costs, making the best use of supplies, and supply augmentation. The negative impacts associated with the no actions would be largely benign, adding implementation time to efforts and preventing growth and dry year operations. According to the IRWMP, the difference between water supply and demand in dry years is only about 6%, which appears as though it could be made up by use of water conservation measures. The applicant did not demonstrate a critical need for these projects.

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Question: Disadvantaged Communities. Weighting factor is 2.

2

The applicant states that there are no DACs in the region according to the MHI definition and does not discuss the issue further in this Attachment. In general, the applicant states that all communities, DACs included, in the region will benefit from the projects on an equal basis.

Question: Program Preferences. Weighting factor is 1.

4

Applicant discusses each Program Preference in relation to each of the 4 projects. Long-term water quality improvements will be made for current users of NBA water, at the expense of current Solano Project users. All communities, DACs included, within the region will benefit from projects. The intertie project would allow allocation of some of the unused NBA supply to beneficial uses while providing carryover storage capacity of the Solano Project water by leaving it in Lake Berryessa. The degree of integration is questionable, but the mix of projects does seem to provide multiple benefits.

TOTAL SCORE: 83
